



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: November 7, 2019 REPORT NO. HRB-19-043

HEARING DATE: November 21, 2019

SUBJECT: **ITEM #6 – Laura Slemmons Spec House #1**

RESOURCE INFO: [California Historical Resources Inventory Database \(CHRID\) link](#)

APPLICANT: SQFT Investments; represented by Scott A. Moomjian

LOCATION: 3853 8th Avenue, Uptown Community, Council District 3
APN 452-093-21-22

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Laura Slemmons Spec House #1 located at 3853 8th Avenue as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Laura Slemmons Spec House # located at 3853 8th Avenue as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1908 under HRB Criterion C. The designation excludes the rear addition constructed outside of the period of significance. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Queen Ann Free Classic style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1908 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a hipped roof with lower cross gable roof form, horizontal wood siding, cross gabled pediment with decorative vent; projecting bay windows; asymmetrical façade, partial-width front porch with classical columns, simple decorative wood frieze, and original wood fenestration.

BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board in conjunction with a preliminary review application to determine whether or not the building is historically significant as part of a constraints analysis for future development. The property is a one-story single-family residence located in the Hillcrest neighborhood in Uptown.

The property was identified in the *2016 Uptown Community Plan Area Historic Resources Survey Report* as part of a potential Victorian Era Multiple Property Listing and given a Status Code of 5S3, "Appears to be individually eligible for local listing or designation through survey evaluation."

The historic name of the resource, the Laura Slemmons Spec House #1, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the names of Laura Slemmons, who constructed the house as a speculation house.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Scott A. Moomjian, which concludes that the resource is not significant under any HRB Criteria. Staff disagrees and finds that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criterion C. This determination is consistent with the [*Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria*](#), as follows.

CRITERION A - Exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's, a community's or a neighborhood's historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping or architectural development.

Research into the history of the property at 3853 8th Avenue did not reveal any information to indicate that the property exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's or Uptown's historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping or architectural development. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion A.

CRITERION B - Is identified with persons or events significant in local, state or national history.

Research into the owners and tenants of the property at 3853 8th Avenue did not reveal any individuals who could be considered historically significant in local, state or national history. Furthermore, no events of local, state or national significance are known to have occurred at the subject property. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion B.

CRITERION C - Embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period or method of construction or is a valuable example of the use of natural materials or craftsmanship.

The subject resource, 3853 8th Avenue, is a one-story single-family residence constructed in 1908 in the Queen Ann Free Classic style. The house features a hipped roof with a lower cross gable; asphalt shingle roofing; narrow wood lap siding with a simple wood frieze along the north, west and south elevations and two brick chimneys. The cross gabled pediment has a decorative vent and is finished narrow wood lap siding. Under the front gable on the west elevation is one of two bay windows, the other bay window is on the south elevations. Each bay includes a single-light fixed window under a diamond transom flanked by two single-light double hung wood windows. The partial width front porch is accessed via steps leading from the sidewalk and is accented with classical columns and features a single-light fixed window under a leaded diamond transom. Fenestration consists mainly of original wood frame double hung and single-light fixed windows with leaded diamond transoms.

Several alterations have been made to the subject resource since its construction in 1908. A rear addition was constructed on the east elevation and the original garage was removed sometime between 1956 and 1962. The Historical Resources Research Report asserts that the windows on the rear addition are vinyl, but after a field check it was determined that the windows are wood. On the south elevation, a window opening was modified to accommodate a glass block window and a casement window was added within the original opening at a date unknown. Wood hand railings and masonry was to the steps on the west elevation between 2014 and 2018. These modifications do not significantly impair integrity of design, materials, workmanship or feeling.

The Queen Anne style of architecture was a late Victorian style popular in America from about 1880 to 1910 and borrowed heavily from late Medieval English precedents. The style sought to minimize smooth-walled appearances, and was typically characterized by steeply pitched irregular roofs, dominant front-facing gables, patterned shingles, bay windows, and asymmetrical façades with full or partial-width porches. Among the four principal subtypes of the style, Queen Anne Free Classic generally represents an early 20th century transition from traditional Queen Anne to Colonial Revival. The Free Classic subtype exhibits classical columns, typically in pairs, Palladian windows, cornice-line dentils, and other classical details.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Queen Ann Free Classic style and retains integrity from its 1908 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a hipped roof with lower cross gable roof form, horizontal wood siding, cross gabled pediment with decorative vent; projecting bay windows; asymmetrical façade, partial-width front porch with classical columns, simple decorative wood frieze,, and original wood fenestration. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion C.

CRITERION D - Is representative of a notable work of a master builder, designer, architect, engineer, landscape architect, interior designer, artist or craftsman.

Research into the construction of the property at 3853 8th Avenue failed to conclusively identify a builder, designer or architect. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion D.

CRITERION E - Is listed or has been determined eligible by the National Park Service for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or is listed or has been determined eligible by the State Historical Preservation Office for listing on the State Register of Historical Resources.

The property at 3853 8th Avenue has not been listed on or determined eligible for listing on the State or National Registers. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion E.

CRITERION F - Is a finite group of resources related to one another in a clearly distinguishable way or is a geographically definable area or neighborhood containing improvements which have a special character, historical interest or aesthetic value or which represent one or more architectural periods or styles in the history and development of the City.

The property at 3853 8th Avenue is not located within a designated historic district. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion F.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Designation brings with it the responsibility of maintaining the building in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The benefits of designation include the availability of the Mills Act Program for reduced property tax; the use of the more flexible Historical Building Code; flexibility in the application of other regulatory requirements; the use of the Historical Conditional Use Permit which allows flexibility of use; and other programs which vary depending on the specific site conditions and owner objectives. If the property is designated by the HRB, conditions related to restoration or rehabilitation of the resource may be identified by staff during the Mills Act application process, and included in any future Mills Act contract.

CONCLUSION

Based on the information submitted and staff's field check, it is recommended that the Laura Slemmons Spec House #1 located at 3853 8th Avenue be designated with a period of significance of 1908 under HRB Criterion C as a good example of the Queen Ann Free Classic style. The designation excludes the rear addition constructed outside of the period of significance.


Shannon Anthony
Junior Planner


Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner/HRB Liaison

SA/ss

Attachment(s):

1. Draft Resolution
2. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 11/21/2019

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 11/21/2019, to consider the historical designation of the **Laura Slemmons Spec House #1** (owned by S Q F T Investments, 4629 Cass Street, #255, San Diego, CA 92109) located at **3853 8th Avenue, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **452-093-21-00**, further described as BLK 1 LOT 11 N 1/2 in the City of San Diego, County of San Diego, State of California; and

WHEREAS, in arriving at their decision, the Historical Resources Board considered the historical resources report prepared by the applicant, the staff report and recommendation, all other materials submitted prior to and at the public hearing, inspected the subject property and heard public testimony presented at the hearing; and

WHEREAS, the property would be added to the Register of Designated Historical Resources as **Site No. 0**, and

WHEREAS, designated historical resources located within the City of San Diego are regulated by the Municipal Code (Chapter 14, Article 3, Division 2) as such any exterior modifications (or interior if any interior is designated) shall be approved by the City, this includes but is not limited to modifications to any windows or doors, removal or replacement of any exterior surfaces (i.e. paint, stucco, wood siding, brick), any alterations to the roof or roofing material, alterations to any exterior ornamentation and any additions or significant changes to the landscape/ site.

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED, the Historical Resources Board based its designation of the Laura Slemmons Spec House #1 on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION C for its distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Queen Ann Free Classic style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1908 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a hipped roof with lower cross gable roof form, horizontal wood siding, cross gabled pediment with decorative vent; projecting bay windows; asymmetrical façade, partial-width front porch with classical columns, simple decorative wood frieze, and original wood fenestration. This finding is further supported by the staff report, the historical research report, and written and oral evidence presented at the designation hearing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in light of the foregoing, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego hereby approves the historical designation of the above named property. The designation includes the parcel and exterior of the building as Designated Historical Resource **Site No. 0**.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the designation shall exclude the rear addition constructed outside of the period of significance.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Secretary to the Historical Resources Board shall cause this resolution to be recorded in the office of the San Diego County Recorder at no fee, for the benefit of the City of San Diego, and with no documentary tax due.

Vote: N/A

BY: _____
DAVID MCCULLOUGH, Chair
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED: MARA W. ELLIOTT,
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: _____
LINDSEY SEBASTIAN,
Deputy City Attorney